

Eastern CT Veterans Community Center



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Date: March 5, 2022
To: Committee on Veterans' Affairs
From: Eastern CT Veterans Community Center, Windham Region Veterans Coffeehouse
Re: SB 343

To Whom It May Concern:

The Eastern CT Veterans Community Center was opened in June of 2022 because of the need for improving the information and services provided to veterans in rural Eastern CT. In the last seven months we have grown in size to represent almost 800 veterans serving our country from WWII to Afghanistan and today. During our weekly coffeehouse meetings we discuss proposed bills, unmet needs of veterans and considerations to improve their health and well-being. It is with this support of so many voices that we submit our support for SB 343, An Act Concerning A Military Occupational Specialty Working Group And A Grant Program For The Reimbursement of Certain Licensing, Certification, Registration or Tuition Fees.

We have been working with many unemployed or underemployed veterans and find that one of the biggest obstacles that veterans encountered when trying to find jobs or improve their employment status was paying in advance for some of the costs of starting their own business, getting their appropriate certifications or professional licenses, applying for and beginning an apprenticeship program or attending trade programs. A program where these veterans could apply for a grant to cover these costs would enable them to get started on a new career or establish their own businesses. These fees are outside of the education benefit that some veterans receive.

We strongly encourage the working group to speak with agencies, employment professionals and municipal veterans' representatives in determining the financial requirements to enter a new career in CT and to broaden the grant program to include as many of these costs as possible, not just those in careers requiring apprenticeships. We have worked with several veterans who were not able to establish their new business because of the burden of business registrations, tax permits, and licenses. It is imperative that we help our veterans overcome these hurdles so that they can lead meaningful lives and support themselves and their families with little state public assistance.

The Eastern CT Veterans Community Center and the Windham Region Veterans Coffeehouse, with 800 veteran voices, support SB 343 An Act Concerning A Military Occupational Specialty Working Group And A Grant Program For The Reimbursement of Certain Licensing, Certification, Registration or Tuition Fees. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Diane Nadeau
President/CEO, Windham Region Chamber of Commerce
Executive Director, Eastern CT Veterans Community Center &
Windham Region Veterans Coffeehouse